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In an industry such as ours, with so many demands on our attention, we are often faced with situations that press us to work quickly. However, in far too many cases, we see an urgent request result in the adoption of unsafe practices.

We can each recall a building owner's desire to expedite projects ahead of schedule. Or, a project manager wanting cars turned over on time even after multiple spec changes. Or, a building superintendent insisting he or she should be able to move an overweight piece of furniture on top of an elevator car, because they've always done it that way.

These are real life situations where a company's safety program must be followed and turned to as a valuable resource. These safety programs exist to ensure proper business decisions predicated on safety rather than a customer's desire to save time or money.

What does your safety program look like? Does it include following the Elevator Industry Field Employee Safety Handbook, or do you conduct weekly tool box safety talks? Are there quarterly safety training classes on topics mandated by the Department of Labor or elevator industry standard work processes such as fall protection, jumpers, electrical safe work practices, or car top/pit access / egress?

Many companies think they have good safety programs in place. But are these safety programs as good as they could be, or more importantly, as good as they should be?

How effective is your safety program? Does the management team (ownership included) conduct test and verification field assessments on a monthly basis to ensure employees are performing

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their jobs safely? Are field workers following company and/or industry standard work practices as outlined in the Elevator Industry Field Employee Safety Handbook? Are the policies and safe work practices developed and deployed in your safety programs and manuals being fully executed?

The answers to these questions may be found in your accident statistics, what your management system is telling you and the observations during your field assessments.

Our industry is an inherently dangerous trade in which serious, and sometimes fatal, accidents occur. We must do more to avoid mistakes and keep each other accountable. And we mustn't fail to recognize those who work safely because a little affirmation can go a long way. Acknowledging safe behavior and individual performance is crucial to establishing buy-in.

If you take a proactive approach by training, testing and verifying compliance and listening to program improvement recommendations, positive results are much more likely. This triggers greater participation, increased adoption, and acceptance of roles and accountability, all resulting in fewer accidents. The end result - we ALL win! ▲